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ABSTRACT

Student course evaluations are used at New College, Hofstra University as one of the tools to evaluate the effectiveness of New College courses and instructors. This report summarizes all aspects of the evaluations that were completed during 1974-75. The report: (1) summarizes the procedures used in administering the evaluations; (2) describes the evaluation instrument, including its reliability and validity; (3) indicates the results for each session of this year by major area and total college; (4) analyzes the results of the evaluations in terms of regular New College faculty versus adjunct or visiting faculty; and (5) indicates some conclusions to be drawn from this year's evaluations. (JMF)

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SUMMARY OF STUDENT COURSE EVALUATION

FOR THE YEAR 1974 - 75

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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NCERO
June, 1975
Report #18

Summary of Student Course Evaluation For The Year 1974 - 75

During the last academic year, as in previous years, student course evaluations were used as one of the tools to evaluate the effectiveness of New College courses and instructors. This report will summarize all aspects of the evaluations that were completed during 1974-75. Specifically this report will:

1. summarize the procedures used in admistering the evaluations,
2. describe the evaluation instrument, including its reliability and validity,
3. indicate the results for each session of this year by major area and total college,
4. analyze the results of the evaluations in terms of regular New College faculty verses adjunt or visiting faculty.
5. indicate some conclusions to be drawn from this years evaluations.

PROCEDURES

Most New College courses run for a period of seven½ weeks, with some full semester courses (15 weeks) and a few 3½ week courses. During the last week of classes the New College Research Associate allows the instructor to chose a time for the administration of the student course evaluations. At the chosen time the research associate administers the instrument to the instructor's class, explaining to the students that their responses will not have any affect on their final grade in the course. The instructor at his discretion, is permitted to leave or remain in the room during administration. Once all the results from all classes are collected, they are tallied by computer and summerized in a session report on student course evaluations. The instructors are then given a copy of their evaluation, their major area summary evaluation and the total College summary evaluation.

Description Of Instrument

The total instrument is composed of a maximum of 27 responses. The first 17 are responded to by the following scale:

A = Excellant/Very High (5)
B = Good/High (4)
C = Average (3)
D = Poor/Low (2)
E = Very Poor/Very Low (1)
Blank = Not Applicable

The next three use the scale:

A = Too High/Too Much (5)
B = High (4)
C = Just Right (3)
D = Low (2)
E = Too Low (1)

Summary of Student Course Evaluation for the Year 1974-75
PROCEDURES (continued)

Only those of the last seven that are applicable to the student are checked by the student.

The first seventeen questions are concerned with the following aspects of the course and the instructor:
4 questions on procedures in the class room,
4 questions on evaluating student's perceived increase in skills and knowledge,
4 questions on the instructor,
3 questions on student participation,
2 questions on the overall rating of the course and instructor.
The next three questions are concerned with the instructor's assumptions about the student's previous knowledge; the number of credits offered for the course and the number of weeks of the course. The final seven questions are reasons for registering for the course. A copy of the questionnaire is in Appendix A.

Validity and Reliability

To establish the validity of this instrument, multiple factor analysis studies were performed during the 1973-74 academic year. The results of these analyses are summarized in the Session I, 1974-75 report on student course evaluations (see Appendix B). The results indicate that two basic factors consistently appear: (1) the instructor course evaluation factor and the (2) student evaluation factor. These two factors suggest that the instrument does have some validity given the purposes for which it was designed.

To establish the reliability of the New College Course Evaluation Questionnaire, a study was performed during the first session of the current academic year. The results indicated an internal consistency coefficient of .85 for the total questionnaire and an interrater reliability of .64. A thorough description of this study appears in the Session I student course evaluation report (see Appendix B).

During the current year, an additional study was completed for the purpose of establishing the possible effect of asking a student to identify himself/herself. The basic question asked in this study was: What identifying variables can be asked of student evaluators on course evaluation questionnaires without affecting their responses? A five by four factorial experiment was performed. The four "identifing" variables were: name, class code, sex, and year in school.

The results of the study indicated that there were no statistical changes in the responses no matter which "identifing" variables were asked of the student. A complete summary of this experiment appears in the Session II course evaluation report (see Appendix C).

Summary of Student Course Evaluation for the Year 1974-75

RESULTS

Tables 1 thru 6 on the following pages present the results of the Course Evaluations questionnaire (questions 1 to 17) over the past academic year, by session, for the College as a whole, and then by Area (Humanities, Social Science, Natural Science, Interdisciplinary Studies) and for the Special Studies Program.

As indicated in Table 1, the overall rating for all questions across all session was 3.91. This represents a rating of approximately "good" on the 5 point scale described earlier (page 1). The questions which were consistently rated over 4.00 were the following:

6. Increase your knowledge
9. Quality of class presentations
11. Availability of instructor outside the class
12. Overall rating of instructor in class
13. Student's attendance in class

This would suggest that students are satisfied overall with the instructors of New College and have a positive perception of the instructor's ability to transmit knowledge.

The questions consistently rated low were:

4. Value of exam or exams
5. Extent course increased student's writing skills.

It is interesting to note that for the past two years these same two items have received consistently low rating. Since the questionnaire is most typically administered prior to the students taking their final exams, low ratings on question 4 may be an expression of apprehension regarding their anticipated performance on exams. Similarly, if students have been examined insufficiently (i.e. no exams taken in a course), then logically the students perception of the usefulness of exams will be limited. With reference to question 8 on writing skills, students apparently do not perceive their courses to be sufficiently or integraly related to their development of writing skills, even though it is collegiate policy that satisfaction of the New College Writing Program is interlocked with writing assignments completed for courses. On the other hand, and in spite of this intended connection, students simply may not see their writing skills as improving as a result of assignments completed for courses.

The following three questions had mean responses which increased as the year progressed:

4. Value of exam or exams
5. Extent course increased student's writing skills
16. Extent student's expectation of course were met

It seems that as the year progressed the students saw more value to their exams and writing experiences. It is difficult to determine whether this change represents different perceptions on the part of students or changes

TABLE 1

THE RESPONSE RATES AND MEAN RESPONSES TO THE
FIRST 17 QUESTIONS FOR THE TOTAL COLLEGE DURING THE FOUR SESSIONS OF 1974-75

Overall College Question #	Avg.	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
1.	4.00	4.03	3.91	4.02	4.04
2.	3.78	3.75	3.70	3.79	3.86
3.	3.87	3.81	3.87	3.86	3.95
4.	3.48	3.27	3.47	3.55	3.61
5.	3.79	3.68	3.82	3.78	3.89
6.	4.12	4.10	4.15	4.07	4.15
7.	3.92	3.73	3.88	3.94	3.93
8.	3.31	3.32	3.32	3.31	3.36
9.	4.10	4.10	4.09	4.05	4.16
10.	4.01	4.00	4.02	3.97	4.04
11.	4.19	4.23	4.22	4.18	4.13
12.	4.15	4.19	4.15	4.12	4.15
13.	4.26	4.37	4.21	4.31	4.13
14.	3.90	4.03	3.84	3.90	3.83
15.	3.87	3.97	3.74	3.91	3.85
16.	3.78	3.69	3.72	3.77	3.92
17.	3.92	3.91	3.89	3.91	3.98
Response Rate	70.5	74%	65%	74%	69%
Overall Means	3.91*	3.90*	3.88	3.91	3.94

* NOTE Overall mean represent the mean of the mean in the respective column.

σ = .24

TABLE 2

THE RESPONSE RATES AND THE MEAN RESPONSES TO THE FIRST 17 QUESTIONS FOR THE HUMANITIES AREA DURING THE FOUR SESSIONS OF 1974-75

HUM. Question #	Avg.	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
1.	4.14	4.12	3.99	4.15	4.31
2.	4.03	4.08	3.90	4.00	4.14
3.	4.08	3.98	3.89	4.08	4.38
4.	3.56	3.57	3.51	3.52	3.63
5.	3.91	3.71	3.63	4.00	4.28
6.	4.26	4.24	4.14	4.18	4.49
7.	4.12	4.09	4.04	4.10	4.23
8.	3.50	3.47	3.48	3.32	3.74
9.	4.19	4.16	4.05	4.21	4.32
10.	4.11	4.10	4.01	4.08	4.23
11.	4.12	4.11	4.12	3.94	4.30
12.	4.23	4.15	4.08	4.23	4.40
13.	4.23	4.29	4.11	4.25	4.21
14.	3.90	4.00	3.80	3.84	3.97
15.	3.96	4.01	3.84	3.94	4.06
16.	3.94	3.85	3.79	3.94	4.18
17.	4.05	4.07	3.91	4.04	4.17
Response Rate	66.5%	65%	61%	75%	65%
Overall Means	4.02	4.00	3.90	3.99	3.93

σ = .21

TABLE 3

THE RESPONSE RATES AND THE MEAN RESPONSES TO THE FIRST 17 QUESTIONS FOR THE SOCIAL SCIENCES AREA DURING THE FOUR SESSIONS OF 1974-75

SOC.SCI. Question #	Avg.	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
1.	3.92	3.93	3.83	4.03	3.90
2.	3.67	3.51	3.62	3.73	3.80
3.	3.81	3.71	3.83	3.85	3.83
4.	3.45	3.19	3.36	3.56	3.67
5.	3.77	3.68	3.96	3.74	3.70
6.	4.07	4.00	4.21	4.08	3.98
7.	3.83	3.79	3.80	3.89	3.82
8.	3.16	2.97	3.11	3.30	3.27
9.	4.02	4.08	4.04	3.95	4.01
10.	3.95	3.97	3.94	3.94	3.93
11.	4.13	4.22	4.09	4.24	3.96
12.	4.08	4.20	4.10	4.05	3.98
13.	4.24	4.40	4.20	4.27	4.09
14.	3.89	4.00	3.87	3.98	3.72
15.	3.82	3.94	3.71	3.86	3.75
16.	3.70	3.58	3.75	3.69	3.78
17.	3.85	3.81	3.86	3.86	3.86
Response	70.75%	75%	65%	73%	70%
Overall Mean	3.84	3.82	3.84	3.88	3.83

σ = .25

TABLE 4

THE RESPONSE RATE AND THE MEAN RESPONSES TO THE FIRST 17 QUESTIONS IN THE INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES AREA DURING THREE SESSIONS OF 1974-75

Interdisciplinary Studies Question #	Avg.	1st	2nd	3rd	4th*
1.	3.64	3.78	3.25	3.90	
2.	3.77	3.62	4.00	3.90	
3.	3.54	3.38	3.33	3.90	
4.	3.29	3.24	3.14	3.50	
5.	3.14	3.06	2.75	3.61	
6.	3.75	3.84	3.25	4.15	
7.	3.84	3.65	3.88	3.98	
8.	3.26	2.89	3.25	3.63	
9.	3.48	3.43	3.00	4.00	
10.	3.48	3.16	3.38	3.90	
11.	3.95	3.62	4.00	4.22	
12.	3.56	3.53	3.13	4.02	
13.	4.28	4.24	4.00	4.59	
14.	4.01	3.97	3.75	4.31	
15.	3.97	3.81	3.75	4.34	
16.	3.23	3.17	2.88	3.63	
17.	3.50	3.43	3.13	3.93	
Response Rate	74.3%	76%	62%	85%	
Overall Mean	3.63	3.51	3.21	3.96	

* No I.S. Area course was evaluated during the fourth Session.

σ = .31

TABLE 5

THE RESPONSE RATES AND THE MEAN RESPONSES TO THE FIRST 17 QUESTIONS FOR THE NATURAL SCIENCE AREA DURING THE FOUR SESSIONS OF 1974-75

NAT. SCI. Question #	Avg.	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
1.	4.00	4.23	4.03	3.72	4.00
2.	3.56	3.54	3.30	3.64	3.77
3.	3.72	4.00	3.86	3.51	3.52
4.	3.15	2.00	3.81	3.47	3.32
5.	3.57	3.15	3.70	3.50	3.93
6.	4.06	3.92	4.27	3.70	4.35
7.	3.80	4.00	3.78	3.53	3.87
8.	2.81	3.08	2.54	3.06	2.57
9.	4.15	4.08	4.19	3.93	4.39
10.	3.93	3.77	4.14	3.79	4.03
11.	4.36	4.62	4.34	4.20	4.29
12.	4.21	4.23	4.22	4.09	4.30
13.	4.32	4.54	4.33	4.26	4.16
14.	3.96	4.15	3.97	3.70	4.03
15.	3.76	3.92	3.58	3.59	3.94
16.	3.68	3.67	3.51	3.48	4.06
17.	3.80	3.81	3.71	3.63	4.03
Response Rate	66.75%	81%	64%	67%	55%
Overall Mean	3.81	3.81	3.84	3.69	3.92

σ = .39

TABLE 6

THE RESPONSE RATES AND THE MEAN RESPONSES TO THE FIRST 17 QUESTIONS FOR THE SPECIAL STUDIES AREA DURING THE FOUR SESSIONS OF 1974-75

SSP Question #	Avg.	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
1.	4.21	4.33	4.00	4.25	4.24
2.	3.92	4.19	3.82	3.95	3.72
3.	3.89	4.06	3.98	3.64	3.87
4.	3.56	3.27	3.53	3.76	3.67
5.	4.00	4.13	4.03	3.87	3.97
6.	4.20	4.40	4.05	4.21	4.15
7.	4.11	4.32	3.80	4.38	3.95
8.	3.58	3.74	3.69	3.38	3.50
9.	4.22	3.74	4.36	4.38	4.39
10.	4.27	4.48	4.27	4.17	4.15
11.	4.58	4.62	4.66	4.58	4.45
12.	4.47	4.58	4.53	4.43	4.33
13.	4.34	4.43	4.34	4.42	4.15
14.	3.79	4.15	3.78	3.36	3.87
15.	3.91	4.10	3.71	3.96	3.87
16.	4.05	4.11	3.75	4.38	3.97
17.	4.18	4.33	4.12	4.13	4.13
Response Rate	85.25%	89%	77%	80%	95%
Overall Mean	4.08	4.17	4.02	4.07	4.02

σ = .27

Summary of Student Course Evaluation for the Year 1974-75

RESULTS (continued)

in instructors views on writing and exams. With reference to question 16, either the courses came closer to the student's expectations or the students modified their expectations to fit the courses they had been taking.

On the other hand, there was one question for which ratings decreased as the year progressed: Question 11, Instructor's willingness to be available to students outside the classroom. Ratings to this question are undoubtedly confounded by the students perception of availability and the actual availability of the faculty. Nevertheless, it would appear that as the year progressed the students perceived the faculty as less and less available to them outside the class.

Referring to the response rate, at the bottom of each table, we see that response rates were lowest in the second and fourth sessions. These were the sessions in which full semester length courses ended and were consequently evaluated. The end of these two sessions also coincides with the end of the regular semesters and the end of the year. In general, it may be that students tire by these points, enthusiasm wanes, and class attendance drops. Since response rate is dependent on class attendance, this result does suggest that class attendance may be at a low at the conclusion of semesters.

The instructor's in the Special Studies Program (SSP) consistently were rated higher by the students in the SSP courses than were the instructors in any other Area. These high ratings may be a reflection of the more intimate relationship which exists among students and faculty in the SSP program. As a program specifically designed for students who otherwise would not have been admitted to Hofstra and as a program were close advisement relationships are encouraged, these high ratings may not be unexpected. Also with this in mind, it is not necessarily surprising that the instructor's availability was the question which was rated highest by students in SSP courses.

The Area rated next highest overall was the Humanities. Six of the seventeen questions on the questionnaire consistently received ratings over 4.00. Specifically these highly rated questions were those concerned with increasing the student's knowledge and interest in the field of study, the quality and order of presentation by the instructor, the instructor's overall rating in the classroom, and the student's attendance. The one question rated highest in the Humanities was concerned with increasing the student's knowledge in the field. Since this is usually considered one of the primary goals of any education, it seems, at least as perceived by the students taking Humanities courses, that the Humanities program is doing its job!

TABLE 7

COMPARISON DATA ACROSS MAJOR AREAS
DATA DERIVED FROM TABLES 1-6

AREA	OVERALL MEAN AND ST. DEV.	QUESTION WITH MEAN OVER 4.00	QUESTIONS WITH MEANS LESS THAN $\mu - 1\sigma$	NUMBER OF QUESTION WITH HIGHEST MEAN	SESSION IN WHICH RESPONSE RATE LOWEST	QUESTION INCREASING	QUESTION DECREASING
HUMANITIES	μ= 4.02 σ= .21	6,7,9,10, 12, & 13	4 & 8	6	2nd & 4th	No Trends →	
SOCIAL SCIENCE	μ= 3.84 σ= .25	13	8	13	2nd & 4th	2,4,17	10,12
NATURAL SCIENCE	μ= 3.81 σ= .39	11,12,13	8	11	2nd & 4th	none	3,13
INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES	μ= 3.63 σ= .31	13	none	13	2nd	7,8,10,11	none
SPECIAL STUDIES	μ= 4.08 σ= .27	1,6,10,11, 12,13,17	4 & 8	11	2nd	No Trends →	
COLLEGE	μ= 3.91 σ= .24	6,9,11,12, 13	4 & 8	13	2nd & 4th	4,8,16	11

Summary of Student Course Evaluation for the Year 1974-75

RESULTS (continued)

Third highest in overall rating was the Social Science Area. However, only one question consistently received a mean rating over 4.00 and that was the question pertaining to student's attendance. Nevertheless, three questions were rated higher as the year progressed. These questions were: 2. value of assigned readings, 4. value of exams, 17. rating of the course overall. Perhaps these improved ratings as the year moved on, indicate some change on the part of the instructors or a change in the perception of the student's regarding the value of assigned work, exams, and consequently the course overall. At the same time, students in Social Science courses rated the instructors order of presentation and overall performance of the instructor progressively lower as the year progressed. Thus it would appear that as the year progressed, students in Social Science courses viewed their instructors less positively, yet found the courses overall more satisfactory. The exact explanation for this phenomena is not visible from this type of data.

The overall mean rating for the Natural Science courses was close to but slightly below the mean for Social Science courses. Three questions consistently rated above 4.00 for Natural Science courses were the instructor's availability, the overall rating of the instructor, and the student's attendance. Availability of the instructor outside the class was the question which consistently received the highest rating suggesting that the Natural Science faculty are perceived by the student's as readily available. Questions pertaining to the value of assigned papers, projects, etc., and the student's class attendance showed a progressive decline in ratings as the year progressed.

The Area showing the lowest overall mean ratings for the year was Interdisciplinary Studies. The only question consistently rated above 4.00 in the IS Area was student's attendance. However, ratings on questions pertaining to increasing interest in the field of study, improvement of writing skills and the instructor's order of presentation and availability all increased as the year progressed.

The one question which was rated high in all Areas was number 13 which asks the student to rate his own attendance in class. It is either a fact that students do attend regularly or it is the student's way of saying something positive about himself.

Regular New College Faculty Evaluations in Comparison to Visiting* New College Faculty Evaluations

During the past academic year, the New College research office became aware of an apparent or potential difference in the ratings of instructors who are regular full-time faculty at New College and the ratings of instructors who are "visiting" New College for the purpose of offering one or more specific courses. To explore this possible difference, the following study was carried out.

*Visiting faculty is used here to refer to all faculty, part-time or full-time, from other units of the University or from outside the University, who taught courses at the college during the past year. Traditionally, the regular full-time faculty at New College are unable to offer the full range of courses needed in the curriculum; therefore, faculty from other units of the University as well as teachers from outside are invited to teach one or more courses during the year.

Summary of Student Course Evaluation for the Year 1974-75

RESULTS (continued)
Regular New College Faculty Evaluation in Comparison to Visiting New College Faculty Evaluations

Procedures: All course evaluation for the 1974-75 year were analyzed in the following manner: (1) For each session, each instructor was recorded as either being "regular" or "visiting". (2) Results on the two questions from the questionnaire which the research office felt adequately summarized the student's ratings of the instructor and course were compared. The specific questions were: 12. Rate the instructor overall for his work inside the class and 17. rate the course overall. (3) Since the response to question 17 appears to be dependent on the response to question 12, two separte analyses were performed. For question 12, a four by two factorial analysis was completed. The four corresponds to the four sessions and two to "regular" and "visiting". For question 17, a similar procedure was followed.

Results: For the instructor question (item 12) the computed F ratio for regular and visiting was 9.17 (significant at .01). The F ratio's for sessions and the interaction was not significant. A followup test indicated a significant difference between the "regular" and "visiting" in the third and fourth sessions.

For the course rating question (item 17) the computed F ratio was 4.74 (significant at .05 for 1 and 3 degrees of freedom). The F ratios for sessions and the interaction were not significant again. A followup test indicated a significant difference between "regular" and "visiting" in the fourth session only.

Discussion: The result presented above seem to point to a statistically significant difference between the ratings of "regular" New College faculty and "visiting" New College faculty. In general, "visiting" faculty receive lower ratings on questions 12 and 17 than do "regular" faculty. A number of possible reasons for this occurance may be postulated: (1) perhaps "visiting" faculty have greater difficulty teaching their courses at New College because of the differences in course length; e.g. "visiting" faculty may be unaccustomed to presentation of course material in a shorter time span, although the number of contact hours with students remains approximately the same.

(2) Perhaps New College students have greater difficulty relating to or identifying with "visiting" faculty and vice versa.

(3) Perhaps students perceive the "visiting" faculty as having less influence over their lives and thus the studentsare more severe in their evaluations because they see less possible threat to themselves.

(4) Because "visiting" faculty may not perceive their obligations at New College as essential or as outside of their regular duties and responsibilities, they may be less motivated and this is perceived by the students.

RESULTS (continued)

Regular New College Faculty Evaluation in Comparison to Visiting New College Faculty Evaluations

The above are only some possible reasons for the differential rating of "regular" and "visiting" faculty by New College students. Whatever the cause, the issue should be monitored further.

CONCLUSION

As a result of this past years student course evaluation we can draw a few conclusions and suggest some possible studies for the future.

During this past year we have validated and checked the student course evaluation instrument for reliability. If no major changes in the instrument are introduced then this process need not be replicated.

If one wishes to perform studies in which identifying information is required of students on the student course evaluation instrument then this can be done. The results of the experiment during the second session suggested there was no influence on the responses of students who identified themselves.

Overall the students of New College seem satisfied with the quality and quantity of knowledge offered by its instructors and courses. The only aspects of the course the students questioned were the value of examinations and the ability of the courses to increase their writing skills. Perhaps a further study into the reason for this low rating should be instituted. It would probably give added insights in to how the students perceive their courses and instructors.

The response rate indicates a genuine cooperation between the student and the Research Associate. The sessions in which the response rates were lower, were the second and fourth sessions. Possible reasons for this were discussed, but the issue deserves further study.

One last result was that "regular" New College faculty are rated higher than part-time or "visiting" faculty. Several possible reasons for this were advanced.